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ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
Select Committee on
Energy Independence and Global Warming
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS
CHAIRMAN

March 3, 2010

The Honorable Catherine Zoi
Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Secretary Zoi:

I would appreciate clarification on your January 6, 2010 letter regarding the "*National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) Response to the Report 'Study of the Effects on the Employment of Public Aid to Renewable Energy Sources' from King Juan Carlos University (Spain)*." Your response did not address the questions I initially posed in my September 24, 2009 letter.

I would like a response to the following questions:

1. How much DOE funding was provided for this specific study?
2. Who requested the study and what was the stated reason to undertake the response?
3. Who initially approved the white paper response and funding?
4. What is NREL's policy of commissioning reactionary studies? What guidelines does the DOE provide?

Further, a recent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request has revealed new concerns in relation to the white paper. On November 13, 2009 my staff emailed the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy (EERE) and requested an update on the status of the September 24 letter. At that time your staff responded "I don't believe that we have seen this letter before." The FOIA request, however, reveals emails as early as September 29, in which DOE staff discussed my September 24 letter. I am extremely disappointed that DOE EERE took nearly three-and-a-half months to provide an inadequate response to my inquiry. Given the recent FOIA documents, I'm equally concerned that the delay stemmed not from inattention, but from a deliberate attempt to avoid the inquiry. Given the recent FOIA disclosures, please respond to the following:

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5. The documents reveal internal debate in which DOE and EERE staff deliberately avoids answering direct questions in relation to the origination of the study. This elusiveness is troubling. A September 2 exchange asked, "how often does [this type of study] happen" and that "this is the first time we've been asked to respond so directly [to another study]," with the reply as "That is probably the true answer." Another DOE employee specifically says "Let's avoid this type of direct response." This tactic was intended to mislead to direct inquiries into the study.
 - a. Can you identify any previous instances in which NREL commissioned a paper intended as a direct rebuttal of a foreign study?
6. DOE and EERE, in conjunction with NREL, appear to have closely coordinated a strategic response to the King Juan Carlos study with outside interest groups, specifically the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), American Wind Energy Association (AWEA), the Center for American Progress (CAP), and others.
 - a. How often do NREL and EERE coordinate policy strategy with special interest groups? Please provide all documentation of contact with CAP, AWEA, and UCS to the Select Committee.

Please respond to the above questions by March 19, 2010. If you have any questions, please contact Andy Zach with the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming at (202) 225-0110.

Sincerely,



F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

Ranking Member

Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming